

AOC Newsletter

Volume 1, Edition I

A Publication of the Administrative Office of the Courts

Winter 1998

Welcome from the Director of AOC, Paul F. Isaacs

I want to welcome you to the first edition of the Administrative Office of the Courts Newsletter. This publication will be a valuable communication tool and will help us to continue opening lines of communication with in our agency.

As I write this, we are beginning the 1998 regular Session of the Kentucky General Assembly. Our office will spend a considerable amount of time working to pass a budget and tracking legislation that will impact the Judiciary. Some of the legislation will be of interest to the Administrative Office of the courts, and future newsletters will keep you abreast of issues that may arise.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the people whose efforts went into the creation of this newsletter. Your efforts are certainly appreciated. I hope that every A.O.C. staff member will take an opportunity to contribute to this newsletter by contributing stories, helping with production, or just reading and enjoying its content.

Assistant Director: Laura Stammel

Executive Assistant: Russell L. Salsman

Director's Secretary: Mary Nell Dempsey

People Profile: Chief Justice Robert F. Stephens



Chief Justice Robert F. Stephens was interviewed for this newsletter article on February 20, 1998 by Christopher Cecil in the Office of the Chief Justice.

Chief Justice Stephens has spent a lifetime of public service dedicated to the citizens of the Commonwealth. Upon completing law school, the youthful Stephens served as law clerk to the Court of Appeals and Chief Justice James Cammack who became one of the important influences in his life. Before being appointed to the Supreme Court by Governor Julian Carroll, Chief Justice Stephens served as the Attorney General. Although he had no idea that he would serve on the Supreme Court, especially as Chief Justice, Stephens considers it a privilege having served with 25 or 26

outstanding men and women. Chief Justice Stephens concedes "that the Lord has been kind enough to me, and generous enough to me, to let me occupy that position".

If there were lessons to be learned and passed on, one would be that judicial offices are predominately filled with individuals of integrity that serve as judges in this state.

Chief Justice Stephens is quick to give credit for his success to his staff and managers at the AOC. He will impress upon his successor to continue paying close attention to the AOC, which he describes as a wonderful organization.

The Chief wants to extend assurances that the AOC staff need not worry about job security but rather, should look forward to change as an opportunity to correct some things that may have gone stale. One regret expressed by the Chief is that he didn't get to know the AOC staff as well as he would have liked.

Feeling that it is time for him to step down (which he will do in October, 1998), the Chief recommends that the AOC staff continue their hard work to serve judges and clerks. His hope is that they feel free to work toward improving

the system by sharing their ideas with managers; managers sharing their recommendations with the director etc... Meaningful improvement will only come through the networking of AOC Departments and through open lines of communication. Chief Justice Stephens would also like to see educational stipends reinstated as a way to help staff better themselves.

After his departure from office, Chief Justice Stephens will balance his time between acclimating his successor to their new office; serving the Kentucky Bar Association; the Salvation Army and other charitable organizations; and teaching law at the University of Kentucky.

The Chief looks forward to renewing ties with his four children and five grand children. He also plans to enjoy reading spy and mystery novels and given his interest in high performance automobiles, he has no intention retiring quietly!

Reflecting upon this interview, the one regret that I have is failing to spend more time with Chief Justice Stephens. He is a very gracious, and interesting individual and will be missed by AOC upon his retirement. Clearly our loss will be the gain of many others. We wish him only

the best, and the Commonwealth will benefit from his accomplishments for many years to come.

Code of Conduct

A legal opinion by the AOC Office of General Counsel was recently issued concerning Speaking Engagement Fees:

Q. May an AOC employee accept a speaking engagement fee if the employee takes unpaid leave to fulfill the engagement?

A. No employee should request or accept any fee or compensation beyond that received by the employee in his or her official capacity, for advice or assistance given in the course of his or her public employment. The Code of

Conduct contains no language which distinguishes between whether the employee takes unpaid leave, paid leave or remains on AOC time to fulfill the speaking engagement. Therefore, the taking of unpaid leave does not remove the employee from this prohibition as the employee would not have been engaged as a speaker but for "his or her public employment." The reimbursement of travel expenses is not prohibited by the Code of Conduct.

Q. May a speaking engagement fee be paid to an AOC account?

A. The answer to this

maintenance of an inventory system of all court owned furniture and equipment.

***Print Shop:
Supervisor-
Mike Howard***

From the concept stage of a project to the finished product, this eight person staff meets the printing needs of the court system. Design work and typesetting are done by computer. Three offset printing presses and a Xerox Docutech high speed publishing system are used to produce

questions depends upon whether the fees are "payment for services" rendered by the AOC employee or whether the amount is donated to this account for departmental use. If payment for services rendered by an AOC employee, the Accounting Department deems the money should be used to reimburse the payroll account. If the fee were made as a donation to a specific AOC departmental account by the payor, the monies would then be assigned to that account

approximately 16 million impressions per year.

***Budget::
General Manager-
Bill Nave***

The budget department staff is responsible for the development of the Court of Justice biennial budget which is presented to each regular session of the Kentucky General Assembly. Budget staff also monitors expenditures on a continuing basis and produces monthly reports on the status of the overall budget, as well as, the budgets of individual

AOC Departments

Accounts & Purchases:

***Assistant Director-
Laura Stammel***

The Accounting and Purchasing section purchases all goods and services used by the Court of Justice, processes all accounts payable, reconciles statements of accounts on a monthly basis, and audits and pays via imprest cash all court system travel vouchers. This section also provides monthly detailed financial reports on all accounts and the coordination of property insurance coverage via

departments. Staff members work one-on-one with department managers to identify and address the needs of each department. Budget staff are frequently asked to review proposals for new or expanded programs in order to determine their potential costs.

Operations Center:

The Operations Center is responsible for installation and maintenance of telephone systems; delivery of office furniture; order and delivery of office supplies; order and delivery of electronic equipment; maintenance on all electronic equipment; oversees installation and maintenance of video system.

Court-Community Relations:

Manager- Deborah Williamson

The Law related Education Division and the public relations office merged to become the Court-Community Relations Division (CCR) during 1996. The CCR staff works to provide citizens with information about the law and legal processes. Funding for many of the programs are received through grants. During the 1995-97 biennium grants totaled \$523,342. CCR staff provides law related education programming to more than 98,000 Kentucky juveniles and adults between July 1, 1995 and July 30, 1997.

Court Services:

Manager- D.J. Simpson

Court Services is responsible for regulating practices and procedures relating to accounting and records of the local courts. The division includes six field representatives and six auditors. The primary objective of the field representatives are to train court clerks and assist the local courts with administrative duties. The primary objectives of the auditors are to monitor financial activities of the circuit clerks and provide technical assistance in matters related to the receipt, disbursement, investment, and reporting of funds collected. This division serves the local courts through training, assistance, periodic visits to inspect court and accounting records, and temporary emergency staffing. Court Services continues to provide support for development and improvements of the automated accounting system, the SUSTAIN court management system and training programs. Additionally, this division is responsible for accounting and SUSTAIN manuals.

Court-Security:

General Manager-

John Hendricks

The primary objective of Court Security is to provide security for high-profile and potentially

volatile trials, as well as to conduct security surveys of court facilities and provide training to bailiffs upon request. The Court Security staff includes six inspectors. The state is divided into five regions averaging 24 county inspectors.

Pre-Trial Release:

Defendants have a statutory right to a pretrial interview, and pursuant to Supreme Court rules of criminal procedure, this interview must be conducted within twelve hours of arrest. After conducting the interview, the pretrial officer verifies the information by contacting references such as family, friends, or employer; information relating to community and economic ties of the defendant is verified. After conducting a criminal history check, the information is presented to the appropriate judicial officer to be used in reaching a bail decision.

Drug Court:

Manager- Lisa Minton

Drug Courts are court supervised, treatment alternatives initiated to address the high recidivism rates in nonviolent drug related cases. The mission is to create a criminal justice environment that stops illicit drug use and related criminal activities, and to promote recovery through substance education and

treatment. The program consists of three phases, lasting an average of one year, and is performance-based with clearly defined expectations and measurable accountability. Drug Courts are currently in operation in four Kentucky jurisdictions: Jefferson, Fayette, Warren and Fulton/Hickman counties.

Education:

Manager- Rita Culbertson

Education courses are conducted for judges, domestic relations commissioners, district court trial commissioners, circuit and deputy court clerks, trial court administrators, and AOC staff so that each group has an opportunity to maintain the highest degree of professional competence necessary to perform the varied court services required by the public and by the law. Supreme Court Rule 8 requires each justice and judge to acquire a minimum of 25 hours of continuing judicial education per biennium. Domestic relations commissioners are required by Supreme Court Rule 53.03(2) to attend 12.5 hours of continuing legal education in the field of domestic relations law annually. Domestic violence education has been mandated by statute and Supreme Court Rule for judges, domestic relations commissioners, district court trial commissioners, circuit and deputy court clerks. Programs conducted by education Services are structured to meet

the mandatory requirements.

Facilities:

General Manager-

Nick Schwendeman

The facilities staff works with the local governments on a daily basis in an effort to improve electrical and mechanical systems, interior and exterior maintenance and repairs, and provides assistance with the utilization of existing space.

Foster Care Review Boards:

Manager- Patrick Yewell

Volunteers review case files of approximately 7,100 children who are removed from their homes and placed into foster care, child care facilities, or with relatives. The purpose of these reviews is to guarantee children receive adequate and appropriate services while in alternative placement and ensure every effort is being made to locate permanent placement for these children so they do not linger needlessly in the state foster care system.

General Council:

Manager- Carol Ullerich

The Office of General Counsel provides legal advice to the Administrative Office of the Courts, judges and circuit court clerks throughout the Commonwealth. Written legal opinions are rendered on formal questions submitted to the office.

Two major focuses of the Office of General Counsel are creation and revision of all AOC forms and updating the Circuit Clerk's Manual. This work is especially important following any legislative session in which statutes are enacted or amended. A third major function, closely intertwined with the first two on-going projects, is tracking legislation considered by the General Assembly to foresee potential impact on AOC. While it is not mandatory that forms generated by AOC be used by the public, these forms streamline the court process and are widely relied upon throughout the Commonwealth. The Circuit Clerk's Manual, a rule of the Kentucky Supreme Court, governs how cases are docketed and identifies any fees which must be collected. The manual is provided in an electronic format with updates being transmitted across the state via dial-outs.

Information Systems:

General Manager-

Mike Donnelly

Information Systems provides analysis, planning, development, installation, implementation, training, and continuing software maintenance support for computer system applications throughout the Court of Justice. These applications are divided into four main categories: case

m a n a g e m e n t , administrative/fiscal, statistical, and office automation.

Juvenile Services:

***General Manager-
Charles Leachman***

Program became effective July 1, 1987. Each of Kentucky's 120 counties have the services of a Court The Court Designated Worker Designated Worker (CDW), 24 hours a day, seven days a week. CDW's process all juvenile complaints, both public and status, against persons under the age of eighteen. Based on criteria, juveniles are either sent to formal court, at which time a CDW's involvement with the case ceases, or placed on a diversion agreement. A diversion agreement is a voluntary contract, which can last no longer than six months, between the CDW and the juvenile to resolve a complaint. Diversion agreements can consist of many requirements, depending on the offense and juvenile. Counseling referrals, workshops, Law Related Education seminars and community service are examples of some things that can be put into a diversion agreement. Education, accountability, and deterrence are the goals of the agreement.

Personnel:

Manager- Rita Cobb

The personnel section provides the administrative, accounting,

and clerical services necessary to maintain a work force of approximately 2,900 judicial and non-judicial personnel. Included in the 120-county system are justices and judges, trial commissioners, circuit clerks, deputy clerks, appellate clerks, pretrial release officers, juvenile court designated workers, secretaries, official court reporters, trial court administrators, law clerks and central staff of the AOC. In addition to paycheck preparation and distribution, the personnel section processes workers' compensation claims, assists in recruitments and selection of personnel, evaluates the classification and compensation system, resolves employee grievances before they reach the formal committee stage, and receives and responds to approximately 1,300 employee request related to employee benefit matters. The efficient management of human resources is a critical factor in balancing fiscal accountability with quality service to the courts statewide. The automated personnel system continues to provide beneficial support in meeting the assigned responsibilities to the personnel section.

Research & Statistics:

Manager- Bonnie Embry

The goal of the Research and Statistics section is to collect and disseminate data and conduct statistical research to assist in the management of

cases for the Court of Justice. This section provides information, analyzes data, submits reports to the director of AOC and the Chief Justice in order to assist them in their task of administering the Kentucky court system. This section also provides statistical information to other agencies or groups outside of AOC, and to the general public. The staff also participates in local court technical assistance activities to improve or assure the integrity of the case-reporting system.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 10 -12 Trial Court Administrators' Seminar,
Dale Hollow State Park

April 24 Teen Court Conference
Holiday Inn, Frankfort
28 Legislative Update Regional Meeting,
Executive Inn, Owensboro
29 Legislative Update Regional Meeting,
Kentucky Dam Village
30 Legislative Update Regional Meeting,
Kentucky Dam Village

Committee Members:

Rachel Bingham
Lisa Broddaus
Christopher Cecil, Editor
Mary Nell Dempsey
John Dobson
Faye Dodson
Carole Henderson

In order for the AOC Newsletter to be successful, all employees are encouraged to contribute articles, notices, and any other points of interest to the Newsletter Committee members. Please contact any of the committee members by April 24, 1998 for the Spring issue if you want to submit any information.



